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H. G. FmUNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

May 26, 1950

FIELD MEMORANDUM SCS 1132

Re: Land-capability classification

## TO FIELD OFFICERS:

A basic policy of the Soil Conservation Service is to follow the land-capability classification in presenting land conditions to farmers and others. Our land-capability classification is based on land facts so organized in a system convenient for use.

Eight land-capability classes are used in this system. They are:

Land suited for cultivation --

Class I. Land of this class is subject to no more than very slight limitations in use. It is very good land that can be cultivated safely with ordinary methods of good farming.

Class II. Land of this class is subject to moderate limitations in use for crop production. It is good land that can be cultivated safely with special practices of easy application.

Class III. Land of this class is subject to severe limitations in use for crop production. It is subject to serious damage from the standpoint of crop production, if used without adequate protection or treatment. It is moderately good cultivable land which can be used regularly for crops where properly treated.

Class IV. Land of this class is subject to very severe limitations in use for crop production. It is fairly good land, which can be maintained best by keeping in perennial vegetation. It can be cultivated occasionally for plowed crops if handled with great care.

Land not suited for cultivation --

Class V. Land of this class is not suited for cultivation, but is suited for grazing, forestry, and wildlife. It has only slight limitations in use.

Class VI. Land of this class is subject to moderate limitations. (But within Class VI land there may be temporary limitations in use owing to condition of vegetation).

Class VII. Land of this class is subject to severe limitations. (But within Class VII land there may be temporary limitations in use owing to condition of vegetation).

Class VIII. Land of this class has limitations that make it unsuitable for cultivation, grazing, or forestry. It has use, however, for wildlife, recreation, or watershed purposes.

Each land-capability class may be subdivided into a maximum of four subclasses according to the kind of land limitations. The subclasses recognized, and symbols to designate them, are as follows:

- e Dominant limitation is susceptibility to erosion, by either water or wind.
- w Dominant limitation is excess water, such as that produced by seepage, high water table, or floods.
- s Dominant limitation is an outstandingly unfavorable soil characteristic, such as low moisture capacity, very high density (imperviousness), excess gravel or stones, shallow effective depth, etc.
- c Dominant limitation is climate, chiefly extremes in precipitation or temperature.

No subclasses are recognized in Capability Class I.

*W. H. Bennett*  
Chief

